THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

April 2, 1951

Description: In the opening segment, ER and Elliott Roosevelt respond to a listener’s question about German opposition to the present Allied decartelization laws. In the interview segment, ER’s guest in Nelson Rockefeller, chairman of the International Development Advisory Board.

Participants: ER, Elliott Roosevelt, Nelson Rockefeller

[Elliot Roosevelt:] The mail today has a letter from Ridgewood, New Jersey, and uh the writer asks that her name be withheld. She writes uh concerning a very good friend of yours and of mine and of our whole family, and a very distinguished man. She asks a question which I would like to hear you answer. She says, “Do I understand it correctly when I read that former Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson has been hired by Germans who oppose the present Allied decartelization law, and that he has told his German clients that John J. McCloy, U.S. High Commissioner in Germany, will arrive at a fair and reasonable solution. That must mean Mr. Patterson hopes to change present Allied decartelization laws to something more favorable to those Germans wanting to reestablish cartels. I don’t understand it. First, we as a country believe cartels are one of the factors contributing to the last war, and we want them destroyed. Then our former secretary of war allows himself to be hired by our former enemies to defend them. I’d appreciate your comments.” (1:29)

[ER:] I have made them already in a column. [Elliot Roosevelt coughs] I said that I was bewildered when I found that uh the former secretary of war under whom the present decartelization system had been set up had taken a case uh which would evidently change that system. I saw a statement by him saying that he was not opposed to decartelization; he simply hoped to change some of the interpretations. Now what that means I don’t know. Um I uh did not see the statement that she quotes about Mr. McCloy. But-- (2:15)

[Elliot Roosevelt:] Would you like for me to read it? I have it right here. Uh it’s from the New York Times, and it’s dated February the twenty-seventh from Frankfurt, Germany. "United States High Commissioner John J. McCloy will arrive at a fair and reasonable solution, former Secretary of War Robert P. Patterson tonight told his German clients who are opposing the present Allied decartelization law for German heavy industry. Mr. Patterson was to board a plane for New York later tonight. Mr. Patterson earlier had submitted a preliminary draft challenging the present procedure as a substantial denial of justice, In his brief, he had contended that the decartelization plan under Allied Law 27 was inconsistent with international law and with due process of law as embodied in the United States Constitution. No change in the American High Commissioner’s policy was envisaged as a result of Mr. Patterson’s six day visit. In the High Commission circles, it was felt that he had obtained a clear understanding of the American position in this problem as a result of his conference with Mr. McCloy and Mr. McCloy’s legal advisors on decartelization. Mr. Patterson declined to state whether he would continue to advise German groups on decartelization, but he said he had no plans for returning to Germany.” (3:45)

[ER:] Well, I-I know nothing about it. I have a high regard for Mr. Patterson and for his legal ability. Um I do not believe that he is a man who would do something for money which he did not believe in. I think it possible he may have come to the conclusion that legally the decartelization uh plans, which were set up uh under him, were not um compatible with our Constitution and were not uh fair and just. But uh that we have always opposed cartels and have felt that they were a contributing factor to bringing about the
last war and World War I, in fact, all wars are absolutely true. We have felt that way, most of us and our government has felt that way in the past. Um so that I am at present very bewildered as to um what exactly is in Mr. Patterson’s mind. Now, I have thought that he might feel that in decartelization we might destroy the efficacy of some of the German production, and therefore um since he is very anxious to see Germany a part of the defense of Western Europe, he might feel that some modification of decartelization would for that reason have to come about. I personally don’t feel that it is a sufficient reason for a change in attitude towards decartelization, and um since he is very anxious to see Germany a part of the defense of Western Europe, he might feel that some modification of decartelization would for that reason have to come about. I personally don’t feel that it is a sufficient reason for a change in attitude towards decartelization, and um I still believe that cartels are very dangerous and do tend to bring about war particularly in the heavy industries which um supply the materials for war preparation. And, that being the case, I am very much disturbed by Mr. Patterson accepting this case and um disturbed by what may come out of this present situation. Um I must say it doesn’t disturb me much more than the sudden soft attitude we’ve taken towards Nazi criminals. Um that lessening and allowing them to go -- lessening of their sentences and allowing them to go free and the return of the property of Mr. [Alfred] Krupp, for instance, and people who had worked in the [IG] Farben works and so forth um business. Um I-I fail to understand that change of attitude on our part and um I wish that we could have a clarification of the reasons for it.

[Elliot Roosevelt:] Well, have you uh-huh ever contacted anybody to find out whether uh Mr. McCloy would make a uh statement uh which the American public could understand as to why a famous and notorious Nazi criminal like Mr. Krupp should be released from his prison term and not made to serve it out and should have his properties returned to him.

[ER:] Now, I was told that this Mr. Krupp was not the Mr. Krupp who served under Hitler and that this Mr. Krupp, the son, never did serve under Hitler. Now what difference that makes I am unable to explain, so I um I’m not really in a position -- I have -- I wrote the column saying that I was bewildered by the whole thing. And then there was an article on these German war prisoners um by um I think it was General -- some general in one of the magazines which I read, and then I did write to Mr. McCloy and ask what the answer was, but I haven’t had an answer yet. I haven’t had time to get it. (8:39)

[Elliot Roosevelt:] Uh-huh, well, I would like when you get the answer, uh if it isn’t of uh security nature and one which cannot be used, I would like to use that answer for further discussion on one of our later programs. But um I feel that there uh is a tremendous amount of confusion when you read these stories uh which seem to be uh very wishy-washy the fact that uh these two Krupp brothers, whose pictures I saw in the paper, were not actually high in Mr. Hitler’s regime, but they were still very important in the management of those companies, and they have had the companies turned over to them, when it is quite obvious that the decartelization law when it was written specifically stated that the management should lose all control.

[ER:] I-I am just as bewildered as you are about this [Elliott coughs] and just as troubled by the whole situation.

[Elliot Roosevelt:] Well, probably a good answer to this whole problem would be to invite Mr. Patterson to come back on our program, uh [ER: And explain.] uh we had him on not long ago, and have him explain himself. [ER: Mhm.] And uh perhaps if we do that we can have a clarification of the whole problem. But it is tied up, and it seems to me that it is uh offering magnificent propaganda material to the Russians in their fight against us in trying to convince the rest of the world that we are an imperialistic and a capitalistic nation that is not at all interested in seeing justice done.

[ER:] Uh I agree with you.
[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well, I hope that that answers the letter uh from the lady in Ridgewood, New Jersey, and I see that our announcer would like to break in at this point and then we will go on to our interview for the day. (10:37)

[ER:] Mr. Nelson Rockefeller, chairman of the International Development Advisory Board, recently submitted to President Truman a major report with numerous recommendations for stimulating economic development of the so-called underdeveloped areas. To give us a firsthand report of his recommendations, I am honored to have as my guest today the author of these proposals, Mr. Rockefeller.

[Nelson Rockefeller:] Well, Mrs. Roosevelt, the pleasure is very much mine to be here, and I should like to say that it was a board of thirteen who prepared these proposals, representing labor and business and agriculture, two ladies on the board, the president of one of the leading Negro colleges. We came to the conclusions after three months of study, and I’m happy to say they were unanimous conclusions.

[ER:] Good. Well, you had a very uh comprehensive group then that took in all sorts of different interests.

[Nelson Rockefeller:] Well, that’s true and not only uh was the board a representative board in the sense of geographical representation and uh the various interests of the different groups in the country, but also we had -- we were fortunate in having, I might say, an extremely competent group of uh advisors and consultants as well as a very able work group under Stacy May’s leadership, so that we were supported with facts and figures and interpretations by those who have had experience.

[ER:] Well, of course, I have known for a long time um how well-equipped you are for this type of work, so I’m particularly happy to have you come here and give us some of the highlights of this report because you know it’s quite a lengthy report and everybody isn’t going to read every page of it. So perhaps you’ll just give us some of the highlights. [ER laughs]

[Nelson Rockefeller:] We apologize for the length, Mrs. Roosevelt. But when we got in to the subject, uh it is so interesting, it is so important to our own people in the United States as well as the people of other countries that we just felt we had to go on and cover the different aspects and the different phases of our economic relations with the other countries, with the result that it uh stretched out into a number of chapters.

[ER:] Well now, what would you call the highlights?

[Nelson Rockefeller:] Well, I think perhaps uh-uh the most important thing uh that we came across in our study of this subject was the interdependence which exists today economically speaking, as well as politically, and uh from a security point of view militarily speaking -- this economic interdependence uh of the countries, the free countries of the world, the United States’ dependence on the other uh countries, both the underdeveloped countries and the industrial countries of the West.

[ER:] And that’s because of raw materials?

[Nelson Rockefeller:] Raw materials uh as far as our dependence on them, uh I think maybe some -- I know statistics are not very interesting, but I think in this case it’s important. For instance, uh-uh these items we’re-we’re completely dependent on from sources outside of our own borders: natural rubber, manganese, chromium, tin, and uranium. And then we’re a third dependent uh for our lead and aluminum supplies from other countries, and we’re a quarter dependent uh for our supplies of zinc and copper. Uh our industries, whether they’re for peacetime production or whether they’re for wartime production, are dependent on these basic metals. And therefore uh one cannot think in terms of operating from within our own borders today, one has to think in terms of a worldwide interdependence. And the interesting thing
is, just one more figure there, 70 percent of those strategic and critical materials come from the underdeveloped areas.

[ER:] That’s uh that’s I think a very important thing for us to realize in this country, because I think that leads us directly to [ER clears throat] the Point Four idea, and um I’d like um to have you say what you think of the uh -- what is your concept in other words of what Point Four means. (15:05)

[Nelson Rockefeller:] Well, in-in our uh for our own use as a board, we went back to uh President Truman’s original uh statement in his inaugural address uh which was based on the concept of an expanding world economy, uh an expanding world economy in which all of us can increase our productivity, whether it’s the productivity of the people in the underdeveloped areas or in the developed area. Not something just for one group but something which we can all work for together and progress together. And that same philosophy and that same concept was written into the uh Act for International Development by the Congress uh when they passed that bill last fall. So that we’ve taken in its broadest concept, not a giveaway program, not just merely so-called technical assistance, but the overall economic relations between nations uh-uh as they exist in the normal evolution of uh our world.

[ER:] Now, I’m interested in what you said, that it’s the development um not only in the underdeveloped areas, but its a mutual development everywhere, because I’ve come across some people who say in our country: "Well why should we help these other people to develop, it just means we’ll have less um chance to do it ourselves." And I always try, very uh amateurishly, to explain uh that perhaps we need in order to go on some of their things, and um perhaps then they will be able to buy some of our things. Now is that uh a concept that is possible? [ER laughs]

[Nelson Rockefeller:] Well, I’d say it was basic, frankly, uh and one might to see it a little more clearly from-from the point of view of our own people one might reverse the situation and go back a hundred years, a hundred fifty years, when we were an underdeveloped area as it were. Europe thought of us as we now think of many of these areas, and we can see our own history, and uh in looking at--

[ER:] It hasn’t hurt Europe to have us come up!

[Nelson Rockefeller:] No, it hasn’t hurt Europe. Nor did Europe’s, the flow of money from Europe in investments here, uh their so-called technicians coming out, the managers who came out to help build the railroads and the power and the industry and so forth. Uh really we’re in exactly the same situation uh today in relation to these areas which Europe was in relation to us, and as you say our growth well-well some of the countries in Europe were-were fearful of it for a while there. Our industrial strength has not hurt our trade with them, in fact, as we have developed our trade with them has gone up. And then in like fashion as Canada developed, our trade with Canada has gone up, so that the process is not one to be afraid of but rather one to foster.

[ER:] And now that brings me uh to asking you uh a question that concerns me. Um it would look to me as though we would gain by integrating much of our Point Four program with work that goes on in the United Nations. Um do you feel that’s so or not?

[Nelson Rockefeller:] Yes we do, very definitely, and um I might say that that leads me to-to one of our principle suggestions which was the centralization within our own government of the various uh activities that are going on today in this field of international economic cooperation. We feel that that’s essential in order to get efficiency of operation within our own government there about today twenty-three, I think it is, agencies and departments.
[ER:] Well, I saw that was one of your first recommendations that we have one overall organization [Nelson Rockefeller: Well, we just--] which I think must be essential.

[Nelson Rockefeller:] Well, frankly we came to that conclusion very early in the game that if we couldn’t pull our own uh um activities together and we couldn’t get coordination and um consistent policy formation within our own government structure then it was going to be very difficult for us to be effective in cooperating and working with the United Nations. The same is true uh in working with private groups. That unless uh we’ve got clear policy direction at the government level it’s going to be hard to pull the private forces and the international forces together to make a really effective uh-uh program on an international scale, an international basis.

[ER:] Well, I happened to notice today uh that Mr. [Robert] Taft said he had no objection to the Point Four program as long as it wasn’t a giveaway program um and was on a limited scale. Well now, my idea was that we were on a pretty limited scale um uh before, and that what we needed was to expand. (19:55)

[Nelson Rockefeller:] Well, of course the, difficulty with this whole question is that uh each person’s got their own idea of Point Four, and some have very big ideas, and some have very limited ideas, and therefore it’s hard to talk uh-uh until one has defined terms. Now, uh I’ve had the-the opportunity of talking on this subject with Mr. Taft and I know that he has very real interest in this question of development. I think he sees it uh-uh as a great many of the business people do as something which must have sound uh-uh constructive -- or must encourage a sound constructive flow-flow of private capital as the base for increasing productivity [ER: Naturally.] in industry, in agriculture, and in other areas, but uh if I remember the-the story in this morning’s paper, I think he did recognize the-the need for uh the uh Point Four concept, but I think in mentioning that he has this broader concept of an expanding world economy in which we all benefit uh because our productivity as individuals and as nations goes up together.

[ER:] I see, well, that that is uh-uh a very good concept I think, and one that um I-I should think would be basic to the whole plan because uh if we don’t all go up together um this can’t ever succeed because it’s too big a thing. Nothing --

[Nelson Rockefeller:] It isn’t a case of cutting up a limited pie but getting the proverbial increasing the pie and everybody benefitting as it develops.

[ER:] Yes, well, that that I think is the first thing. Now, I think, I’m sorry I have to let our announcer have a word but I’m coming right back, because I want to ask you quickly what are the most important things uh to do. But first of all, our announcer will say a word. (21:52)